

October 26, 1955

Dr. Detlev Bronk
Chairman, N.A.S. Committee on Genetic Hazards of Atomic Energy
Rockefeller Institute
York and 66th
New York 21, N.Y.

Dear Dr. Bronk:

I am asking Professor Sewall Wright to transmit the enclosed comment to you, as chairman of the committee, together with any comments he may wish to add. The enclosure was prepared as a Letter to the Editor, intended for the December issue of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. It argues for a consideration of genetic hazards of atomic energy from a perspective which includes similar hazards from many other sources, in the light of evidence of mutagenic activity of many chemical substances which may be found in the environment.

If this argument is accepted, I suppose it will have to be considered whether responsibility for protection against genetic hazards ought to rest principally with the AEC, or should be shared with other agencies whose primary mission is the public health. However, I felt that to bring in these corollaries might dilute the technical argument, on the one hand, and that it certainly would overreach the zone of my own competence, on the other.

I am sure that Professor Wright, or other professional geneticists on the committee, will be well acquainted with the documentation for my remarks on chemical mutagenesis, but I will be happy to amplify them if that should appear convenient or desirable for your committee.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

CC: Prof. Wright

(J 30)